

**Testimony of Kia D. Floyd
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**Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees
Hartford, CT
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Good Afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and other members of the Committee. My name is Kia Floyd and I am an Assistant Counsel for Labor & Employment matters for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents more than 10,000 companies throughout the state of Connecticut, ranging from large corporations to small businesses. The vast majority of our companies employ fifty (50) or fewer employees, many of whom make up Connecticut's workforce. I am here today to speak on behalf of all of our member companies. CBIA generally supports any labor and employment related legislation that does not increase the costs of doing business in the state or unreasonably increase administrative burdens on employers in dealing with employment and workplace issues. Unfortunately, does not clearly define the terms "location" are not in the best interests of businesses in the state; therefore we urge you to reject both of these measures.

H.B. 5153 AAC Unemployment Benefits for Certain Military Spouses (Opposed)

H.B. 6680 AA Providing Unemployment Benefits for Certain Military Spouses (Opposed)

H.B. 5153 and **H.B. 6680** seek to provide unemployment compensation benefits to individuals who leave their jobs to accompany a relocated military spouse. The business community is grateful for the service that members of the military provide to our country to ensure that our citizens are safe and that our freedom is protected. We also recognize the difficult position that an employee is in when their spouse is reassigned and they must leave their employment in order to be with them. However, we need to keep in mind the intent of the unemployment compensation system.

The unemployment compensation system was designed to respond to the country's need for greater economic stability. It provides individuals who have demonstrated a strong attachment to the work force but lost their jobs through no fault of their own, with temporary income while they actively seek full-time work. Under Connecticut law, when an employee voluntarily leaves his/her employment to follow their spouse, they are ineligible to collect UI benefits. While we clearly understand that families of military personnel face a complex set of challenges, if enacted the proposed measure would violate the intent of the unemployment compensation system. However, Section 31-236(2)(B)(iii) of the Unemployment Compensation Act does allow employees who leave their jobs "solely for reason of governmental regulation or statute," to collect

such benefits. Therefore, it would appear that members of the armed forces would qualify for benefits under this provision of the statute.

The unemployment compensation benefit system in Connecticut is financed entirely by private sector employers. It is designed to be counter cyclical – trust fund reserves are built up when the economy is healthy so that funds will be available to pay UI claims during economic downturns. As written, H.B. 5153 and H.S. 6680 would appear to result in the Connecticut unemployment compensation trust fund paying for a military spouse's benefits because the Connecticut employer would be charged for the experience. This is problematic because it takes need monies out of the Connecticut trust fund and undermines the intent of the system in providing for Connecticut residents who lose their jobs.

As a matter of policy, if the legislature wishes to provide additional services and benefits for military families, it should not be funded through the unemployment compensation system. Drawing down the unemployment compensation trust fund in this manner would jeopardize the historical goals of the system while benefiting a limited percentage of individuals. While we believe the intent of this proposal is noble, we respectfully ask the committee to reject this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.